

"The Original Online ST Magazine"

Volume III No.70

From the Editor's Desk:

Through the course of the past few weeks, we have witnessed changes in some of the Atari sigs on the major services. In addition, you have seen a major difference in the manner in which STReportâ€¢ is being written, we thought it best to allow the readers to "see for themselves" ..(the

changes), and perhaps now, that the lapse of time is great enough for us to point out that it is with great pleasure that we say thank you to the readers for ALL the E-mail we have received encouraging us at STReport to continue in earnest and about the "vast improvement in quality".

Many readers have asked, "Why do you have material in STReport we can easily D/L ourselves?" Our reply was that we wished to make sure the folks who were modemless had an opportunity to read that sort of material. However, in light of the myriad of online "magazines" we shall attempt at all times to contain as much * original * material as humanly possible and to present it to the readers in a comprehensive and highly professional manner. We WILL make every effort to avoid ALL the duplicity we have witnessed in the past few weeks. You, the readers, deserve to have the latest News, plus * original * in depth, opinions, investigative reports, reviews and feature articles. NOT just downloadable files anyone can obtain. We cannot justify having the users pay more than once to download the same information.

Now that We, at STReport, are no longer subject to "outside" influences, as a positive result, the readers can be safely assured that the previous styles seen in this publication are indeed a "thing" of the past. Above all else, we take this time to point out that STReport is a TOTALLY independent publication. It is neither associated, nor part of any other online publications unless so noted in STReport.

A very special thank you to those of you who have sent in for your complimentary subscriptions for our new hard copy newsletter. Many thanks again for your on going support.

Whaaaaat? Ralph is tongue tied? WHY? and who could have achieved this amazing deed?

Actually, it was perpetrated by a number of very well meaning folks from a familiar place called Atari Corp. It's not often that I find myself in the position of being able to hand out "ATTABOY" Awards but this is one time it is certainly deserved.

"As stand I here and feebly open the envelope, and the winners are:

Cindy Claveren

John Townsend

Dan McNamee

Dan Scott

A long time ago I heard a quote that was really to the point and this is truly the occasion to say: "IT'S NICE TO BE NICE"! Not only did I find that a number of users (strangely almost all at the same time) needed the expert services of these fine folks from Atari .. but I did also! To make a long story short, My monochrome monitor launched the flyback transformer into lala land. I found myself in the "white heat of panic" saying..'not now, in the middle of the holidays'.

A call placed to Atari produced some surprising, but very pleasant, results. In a nutshell, "All conditions corrected". The manner in which the customer service and the technical departments handled the "cluster" of problems was quite professional and well expedited.

Naturally I saved the best for last..."Cindy C"! Here is a very concientious young lady who will go out of her way to make sure the developer has all the Atari related needs well taken care of. Cindy and I discussed TOS 1.4 the expected final version and I requested a copy for my own perusal. (I am a registered Developer) Less than a week later I received a copy and am just finished putting it through it's paces. There is an article in this issue about TOS 1.4.

The bottom line is Atari is on the right track in the USA at this time. The number of satisfied users leaving us E-Mail detailing the good experiences they have recently had with Atari are very encouraging. In addition, the mail is overwhelmingly positive and pro Atari...

Ralph.....

*** "1989 - ATARI'S QUEST" ***

:HOW TO GET YOUR OWN GENIE ACCOUNT:

To sign up for GENie service: Call: (with modem) 800-638-8369.

Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that).

Wait for the U#= prompt.

Type XJM11877,GENie and hit RETURN.

The system will prompt you for your information.

THE GENIE ATARI ST ROUNDTABLE - AN OVERVIEW

The Roundtable is an area of GENie specifically set aside for owners and users of Atari ST computers, although all are welcome to participate.

There are three main sections to the Roundtable: the Bulletin Board, the Software Library and the Real Time Conference area.

The Bulletin Board contains messages from Roundtable members on a variety of Topics, organized under several Categories. These messages are all open and available for all to read (GENie Mail should be used for private messages). If you have a question, comment, hot rumor or an answer to someone else's question, the Bulletin Board is the place to share it.

The Software Library is where we keep the Public Domain software files that are available to all Roundtable members. You can 'download' any of these files into your own computer by using a Terminal Program which uses the 'XMODEM' file-transfer method. You can also share your favorite Public Domain programs and files with other Roundtable members by 'uploading' them to the Software Library. Uploading on GENie is FREE, so you are

encouraged to participate and help your Roundtable grow.

The Real Time Conference is an area where two or more Roundtable members may get together and 'talk' in 'real-time'. You can participate in organized conferences with special guests, drop in on our weekly Open Conference, or simply join in on an impromptu chat session. Unlike posting messages or Mail for other members to read at some later time, everyone in the Conference area can see what you type immediately, and can respond to you right away, in an 'electronic conversation'.

CPU REPORT ' '

=====

IV

By Michael Arthur

Remember When:

In September 1976, Gary Kildall started a company called Digital Research in order to market CP/M (Computer Program Management), later making a company called Microsoft one of its OEM's?

Rebels with a Cause: EISA and the OSF

Part I

Progress is a constant in the computer industry. Fueled by both the increasing developments in technology, and the computer user's insatiable need for sophisticated computers that do more, function better, and are easier to use, innovation in the computer industry historically has occurred at a quicker rate than in any other industry. Because of the many ways that these two objectives can be met, great competition results, which usually causes an even greater rate of innovation.

But an almost inevitable, if not dangerous effect of this is that as the rate of innovation increases, the rate of previous products becoming obsolete is speeded up dramatically, and as new products and technologies are introduced, older products become obsolete at a quicker rate. And as users race to upgrade their computers to take advantage of these new technologies, computer companies are competing to make products in a quicker period of time that make their new technologies obsolete. Also, given the many ways that computer technology can be implemented, the invariable problems with all this innovation multiply, as the various computer companies' products can end up being incompatible.

As we all know the effects of incompatibility, the way that the computer industry has tried to deal with this occurrence is to adopt

standards for most aspects of computing by which all competing products could be based on.

But the other side of the coin is that these standards will become obsolete at some time, and if innovation is either slow in coming, or not occurring fast enough, then those standards and the companies supporting them (not to mention the companies and individuals using systems based on those standards) will quickly fall behind the competition, as a result of not adapting to current technologies.

So it is always difficult for computer companies to determine when a standard has reached its lifespan, and should be replaced with a better, more powerful system. Even more difficult is how a new standard should be developed. Among the many factors are whether it should be compatible with existing standards, at the risk of hindering the new standard, what new innovations and technologies should and shouldn't be utilized, and if the new standard is not completely compatible with present systems, what aspects of those standards should be implemented in the new one.

Two excellent examples of this quandary which has plagued the computer industry since its inception are occurring now, with AT&T's UNIX Operating System, and IBM's MicroChannel Bus, which are certain to greatly affect the computer industry. In one case, IBM's problem is not whether the old standard, the aging PC AT bus, has outlived its usefulness, but the steps it took to replace it. In the other case, AT&T's problem does not directly concern obsolete standards, but rather, how the many various implementations of UNIX should be combined into a "merged UNIX", while adapting to current technologies by adopting a single Graphical User Interface, and who should make those decisions.

MicroChannel, EISA, and the Compatibility Issue

In the early 70's, even the standardization that is now common in the industry today was but a far-flung dream, as although CP/M defined a standard Operating System, there were virtually no other standards on the other aspects of computing, such as the bus architecture, disk formats, or type of microprocessor used for computer systems, and indeed many of IBM's successes were based on setting up standards for the industry in these areas. And although the scene today is less standardized than before, with the recent 68000-based computers and 3 1/2 inch drives, things are a LOT better now than they were back then.

Up until now, that is....

Given that the computer industry changes so quickly, it is almost a paradox to see that the IBM PC standard survived so long. But with the advent of the Macintosh, with its many innovations, the IBM standard began to be seen as obsolete. So while efforts like Windows helped maintain the PC standard, IBM and Microsoft were developing new systems to replace the two most important standards: MS-DOS, and the PC AT bus. As this essay is about IBM's replacement for the PC AT bus, a discussion about MS-DOS and its replacement, OS/2, will have to wait until another day.

In April 1987, IBM shocked the world with the introduction of the PS/2, and more importantly, the MicroChannel bus. To truly understand the

benefits of the MicroChannel, and why the PC AT bus needed to be replaced, we must, of course, compare them, to see what was so important about the MicroChannel....

The original PC expansion bus was made to suit the 8086 processor, with its 16 bit address lines and 8 bit data paths. So when the PC AT bus was developed, it suited the 80286 chip that was in the PC AT, with its 24 bit address lines and 16 bit data paths. But oddly, when the 80386, with its 32 bit address lines and 32 bit data paths, was introduced, IBM did not introduce a bus architecture to suit it.

"But what are all those Compaq DeskPros with 80386's using?" you might ask. Well, since there was no one to define a standard bus for the 80386, clone makers were forced to make their own proprietary buses, which were all technically the PC AT bus, but with kludges and fixes to suit the 80386 chip. And the only hope was for a de facto standard, based on the greater popularity of a 80386 system. And while one company, Compaq, did establish a pseudo-standard, even they did not succeed.

Then, in April 1987, IBM introduced the PS/2, along with their replacement for the PC AT bus, the MicroChannel. And interestingly, while the MicroChannel did have 32 bit address and data paths, thereby suiting the 80386 chip, IBM's new bus had much more capabilities than the PC AT bus could ever have.

The MicroChannel also featured a "multimaster" architecture, which means that it uses special circuitry to supervise all add-in boards connected to the bus, so those boards can take over some of the tasks that the main chip (in this case, 80386) would have to do itself, such as spreadsheet calculations, graphics operations, or screen I/O. Effectively making the MicroChannel a multiprocessor system. It also made innovations in the expansion cards themselves. MicroChannel cards are up to 45% smaller than PC AT cards, and the cards can be automatically configured in software to fit the system it is running on, instead of the user doing this task.

But MicroChannel cards require a LOT more logic circuitry than their AT counterparts, as a result of all these new features, and since there is less space on the card itself to put all this circuitry in, designing cards for the MicroChannel can pose tough problems for developers. So one immediate disadvantage of the MicroChannel is that any given card for the PC AT bus can have more features than the same card for the MicroChannel, and since it costs money to put in extra logic circuitry, MicroChannel cards end up costing 10-30% more than similar AT cards. And, since the MicroChannel is a radical departure from the AT standard, AT cards are not compatible with it.

Now, these disadvantages wouldn't normally be important, given all the capabilities of the MicroChannel. But the problem (and the reason that the MicroChannel is still debated about today) is that the logic circuitry needed to take advantage of the multimaster capabilities that make the MicroChannel so special is still in the prototype stage, not to be delivered by IBM for another 6-8 months. Nearly two years after the MicroChannel was introduced....

So the situation developed that, although the MicroChannel had great potential, and it was clearly a superb innovation, that there was no way to take advantage of it. Meaning that the MicroChannel currently offered

no substantial advantage over the AT bus, even becoming a problem, given the lack of compatibility with PC AT cards, and the only tangible reason for using the MicroChannel became IBM's promises. And we in the Atari ST market know all too well the results of vaporware promises....

Initially, there were attempts by Clone Manufacturers to help make the MicroChannel a true standard, as the race to make a MicroChannel Clone became fast and furious. Unfortunately, IBM stopped that race dead in its tracks by demanding royalties of 5% for any MicroChannel clones. This was something unheard of before in the industry, and many began to see the MicroChannel as nothing more than IBM attempting to increase market share.

And demand for MicroChannel Clones stopped completely. So IBM, with the only 32-bit bus standard, had won the battle. But they had not yet won the war....

Left with no AT-compatible 32-bit standard, yet not having the easy option of switching to the superior MicroChannel, IBM Clone Manufacturers, especially Compaq, tried to stick it out with the current system until IBM changed its ways. But finally, with no other option left to them, nine of the major IBM Clone Makers took the only step available to them. They rebelled against Big Blue.

In September 1988, the "Gang of Nine" (a phrase coined by the Wall Street Journal), which included Compaq, Tandy, Hewlett Packard, Zenith, AST Research, and Epson, christened the Extended Industry Standard Architecture, or EISA bus. This bus featured most of the MicroChannel's benefits, such as 32-bit address/data paths and multimaster capabilities, with the one thing that the MicroChannel could not offer. The one thing that IBM had decided should be completely replaced. Namely, compatibility with the ancient PC AT bus standard.

In one master stroke, nine of the most influential companies in the PC market had taken the second option for replacing obsolete standards. IBM had taken the first, deciding to completely replace the PC AT bus with the future. The Gang of Nine went the other way, trying to upgrade the present standard to provide a gateway for new technologies while keeping the old standard. The EISA standard was immediately backed by virtually every IBM PC Company in the industry, except for one. Had IBM, undeniably the best managed company on the Planet Earth, and normally one of the smartest, taken the wrong road? Or had the Gang of Nine rebelled for a cause not worth going after in the long run?

In Part I of this issue, I took a look at the need for constant progress in the computer industry, while seeing how compatibility becomes a major issue. I also examined the MicroChannel standard, to give an example of this. In Part II of this issue, I will show the consequences of the EISA bus, and how it might not make a difference. I will also showcase an example where compatibility is not as important, but where politics takes a critical role: the Open Software Foundation's efforts to improve UNIX.

But ponder, if you will, on this question:

If you were inventing a new operating system, what features would you implement for it?

-----***-----

CPU REPORT CONFIDENTIALâ €
=====

Cupertino, CA Citing the rising cost of DRAM chips and components,

Apple recently announced hefty price hikes of fifteen
to thirty percent on everything they make. But oddly,
while the cost of a Mac II rose by 15%, and the cost of
an SE by 25-30%, Apple did NOT raise the price of their
low end Macintosh Plus....

This, as well as the fact that DRAM prices (and other
types of computers) have not risen in relative amounts,
has caused Mac Users to vehemently protest, saying it
would make it tougher for the Mac to compete against
IBM Compatibles.

Rochester, NY Version 2.0 of Xerox Corporation's Ventura Publisher is

now shipping. Among its 70 new features are new page
makeup and image manipulation tools, the ability to be
run from Microsoft Windows, and 250 context-sensitive
help screens in dialog boxes. Xerox is also offering a
networking version of Ventura Publisher.

Sunnyvale, CA Insignia Solutions is making SoftPC, a new product for

the Mac II which allows it to emulate an IBM PC XT in
software, instead of with a DOS coprocessor card. It
requires 4 Megs of RAM. Cost: 595.00....

West Chester, PA As the New Year marches on, many Amiga Magazines (not

to mention Amiga Users and software companies) are
proclaiming that 1989 will be the beginning of a
"golden age" for the Amiga, with software companies'
acceptance of the Amiga in the past year as proof....

Errata: In Issue Three of CPU Report, I reported that Robert Shady's
===== company was Microtext Software. The true name of his company is
Super Soft. Also, I used the name CPUville, USA, to refer to
where Control Data Corp. was located. The true location is
Minneapolis, Minnesota. In future issues, when I mention the
town, CPUville, USA, this means that I was not able to locate
the headquarters of the company I am talking about, but will in
a future issue.

STR Spotlightâ €

=====

PC Pursuit Aye or Nay?
=====

PART II

..the good news for us, a reversal!

Telenet has since modified its terms for PCPursuit users as follows:

To ALL PC Pursuit customers:

There has been such an overwhelming response to the recent price change to cause the following announcement/letter.

So much so, that my personally responding to EACH in a timely manner is an impossibility. However, we are reading all the mail. This bulletin contains some related new announcements, as well as answers to common concerns.

First, the following announcements:

1. WE HAVE DECIDED TO WAIVE THE LIMITATION OF ONE ACCOUNT PER PERSON. There is now NO LIMIT to the number of PC Pursuit accounts that can be ordered/owned by a single person. Thus, if you have determined that a 60 hour usage cap (or 90, or any multiple of 30 hours) is more appropriate for your typical usage, you can order the appropriate number of accounts.
2. In order to provide you with plenty of time to determine what your requirements are, WE HAVE DECIDED NOT TO BILL YOU FOR ANY OVER CAP USAGE UNTIL MAY 1, 1989. The fixed monthly charge will still increase to \$30 as of February 1, 1989. However, you will not be billed for any non-prime time usage over 30 hours until the month of May 1989. Please note that the actual statement for May usage won't appear until mid June.
3. When we begin billing for monthly usage over 30 hours (beginning with May's usage), WE WILL SUBTRACT THE AVERAGE TIME IT TAKES TO CONNECT (APPROXIMATELY 1 MINUTE) FROM EACH CALL BEFORE ADDING UP THE TIME. Therefore, you will not be charged for a call to a BUSY line (as long as you disconnect the call upon seeing the "BUSY" message). The exact amount of time to be subtracted will be announced within the next few weeks.

Addressing other common concerns:

1. Many people are suggesting that it is the 30 hour monthly usage cap, not the fixed monthly increase to \$30, which concerns them the most. Because PC Pursuit must be transformed to a profitable service to continue offering it, the primary alternative left was to have a higher fixed monthly price with a higher CAP (or a much higher fixed price and no CAP). Raising the fixed monthly charge penalizes those who use the service less than 30 hours a month (which is statistically

the vast majority). We do not believe that the smaller volume user should subsidize the more serious (higher volume) user. Thus, we have the 30 hour cap, which is appropriate for the new \$30 fixed monthly charge. To accommodate higher volume users, we have waived the 1 account per user limitation (see above).

2. When over cap usage billing begins in May 1989, a detailed statement will be mailed to you no less than 10 days prior to your credit card (or checking) account being debited, if your account is to be charged for more than just the fixed monthly charge.
3. The announcement inadvertently states that all cities *now* support all three baud rates. The target was to provide all baud rates to all cities by the end of the year. Unfortunately, some cities have had deployment delays. Latest schedules target the end of January to complete deployment.
4. Some customers were sent terms and conditions that (through a typesetting error) do not include paragraph 7(d) -- which is clearly missing since these copies show 7(c) followed by 7(e). Unfortunately, 7(d) states our policy of 30 days notice for prices changes (or other changes). Some have concluded that since their copy of the Ts & Cs do not include this paragraph, that Telenet can not change the pricing for them. I truly apologize to those who have an erroneous copy. However, the law clearly (and appropriately) provides for any business to be able to change its pricing structure, and/or service offering in any way with reasonable notice. The Ts & Cs simply clarify our implementation of "reasonable notice". Lack of this paragraph does not remove the basic business right to change pricing (or other changes) with reasonable notice.

Everyone here at Telenet wants to work with our customers. The announcements provided here are to accommodate the concerns of many of you, and are a direct result of input received from you.

I urge each of you to take advantage of the next few months (before MAY) to determine what your typical monthly usage actually is. Our statistics clearly show that most of you should not be effected by the 30 hour usage cap. If you find that your usage is higher, you now have the option to order multiple accounts (blocks of 30 hours per month) before over cap billing begins in May.

Sincerely,

Peter Naleszkiewicz
Outdial Services Product Manager

Well, as you can see, PCP wants us to now accept a compromise. As far as I am concerned, nothing has really changed except the date of the implementation of the 30 hour CAP. Consider these points.

1. Allowing users to buy more than 1 account...BIG DEAL!!!!
I for one am not going to pay another \$30 registration fee. The logical thing to have done in that case would have been to allow users to sign up for or change their present status in blocks of 30. This means I would have to have 2 ID'S and PASSWORDS.

2. Users STILL have no way of checking for their connect time for the month. PCP will not even know for a MONTH and A HALF how much over the CAP you have used. I don't know about you but that really instills confidence in me about the accuracy of their billing system.
3. You now are "granted" 1 minute to get a BUSY and get off. So much for autodialing. The only way I can get on some of the more popular BBS's is to autodial them, or get incredibly lucky. That is still not an adequate compromise. I should never have to pay for a BUSY at all.
4. PCP states that the 30 hour CAP is for the system abusers, and not to penalize the lower volume caller. Define "system abuser". From what PCP has stated, a system abuser is one who uses PCP to the extremes (I guess to them, anything over 30 is extreme). One question though, how can you be a "system abuser" of a service that is set up for UNLIMITED ACCESS during NON PRIME TIME PERIODS? I am lucky to have an access number in the town I live in. There are precious few good BBS's in this area and the reason for my signing up for PCP was to be able to call all I want. Not to mention I use it for FNETTING. This CAP is totally unacceptable. Unlimited use is why most of us signed up in the first place.
5. PCP also states (or should I say backs down) from the statement that all cities now support all 3 baud rates (300/1200/2400). Again, "inadvertantly" states in a pretty shallow argument. PCP is trying to make themselves look better than they are. They also state that they are having problems with some of the areas and that it will be completed by the end of January. Given PCP past track record on the expansion of baud rates to 2400, I find this HIGHLY unlikely.
6. PCP claims that the fact that 7(d), stating that a 30 day notice must be given, was a TYPESETTING ERROR. Don't they proofread ANYTHING. Of all things to have a typesetting error on, a CONTRACT. Once again that really instills confidence in their ability to accurately bill me when the CAP takes affect.
7. Not all of us have a 2400 baud access line. I don't and from what I have read on the NET EXCHANGE, a lot of you don't. And those of you who do, seem to say it is nearly impossible to get on the outdials at 2400 baud anyway. I am not suggesting that 1200 baud get a discount but I think that it is unfair to tell us about all their "system enhancements" when it does a great deal of us no good.

These are just a few of my opinions about the new statement concerning the PCP rate hike. This is STILL a totally UNACCEPTIBLE setup. PCP is trying to make us think we are getting off lucky with this new ammendment to the orginal proposal. If nothing else, this ammendment has made me even angrier. PCP seems to treat us as a bunch of monkeys that have nothing better to do than sit there and dial BUSY's over and over. We must continue to let them know that we are outraged consumers about so drastic a change in the PCP setup. I will continue to fight this proposed CAP on usage until May 1,1989. I feel that this is the reason that many of us signed up for it in the first place, and that settling for anything less is too big a compromise. I don't mind a wage increase for monthly usage, that is understandable. As for the CAP, well I think PCP already has a pretty good idea what they can do with that. After all, PCP was one of the ones, not so long ago, that was asking up to write to our congressman about an FCC bill that was going to do what PCP is attempting now. And as many of you noticed, Peter made no mention of

that in his statement. (I wonder why?)

I welcome and appreciate your views concerning this issue, whether or not you are in agreement with me. Lets stick together and keep each other posted on any developments in this sad situation. Thanks for reading this rather LLLLOOONNNGG article. Please fell free to pass this information along to anyplace it can do some good.

Sysop, HyperSpACE I BBS
Spartanburg, SC
FNET Node #391

STR Featuresâ ¢

ATARI IN EUROPE
=====

by Tom Rinaldi

The fact that I am presently on a Mediterranean Deployment aboard the aircraft carrier USS JOHN F. KENNEDY doesn't mean that I am out of touch with the ST community. Very special thanks have to go to my wife for keeping me supplied with the weekly installments of ST Report. It sure isn't the same as loading in a terminal program, flipping on the modem, sampling the various services and private BBSs. But does provide all of us with the latest in news and happenings in the ST world.

The USA is not the only place lacking in STs. Onboard this vessel I have found only a few STs, one 130XE and many more of that other 8 bit computer than I care to count. For the past four months, my efforts at making sure my shipmates are aware of the advantages of the Atari 16 bit computer line have often been compared to the most fervent of "TV Evangelists".

Comparing my dedication to that of fellow sailor Neil Bradley aboard the USS JOHN HANCOCK, I too, was curious to see what the European market for the Atari ST was like. During the past four months of moving about the MED, we called upon eight ports and I found the ST to be almost non-existant! Actually, I found the Atari ST in two ports, Antalya, Turkey and Marseille, France. The rest could possibly be attributed to the various levels of economic depression and of course, the language barriers.

After looking in ports such as Naples (Macs and Commodores all over the place)and in Toulon, France (Big Blue clones are here). I was beginning to feel like 'Wednesday's Child' as far as the Atari ST was concerned. In Palma, Spain, the newstands had magazines for every computer imaginable EXCEPT the ST. At this point in time I began to

wonder, "where are all these computers Atari brags on?"

After many hours of asking questions and checking my notes, I came up with the conclusion that Atari was not in big supply in the coastal cities of the Mediterranean. At last, I found what I was searching for, in Marseille, France and, by golly, they were in good supply. I found Atari STs on sale in the department stores, electronics shops and authorized dealers for under one thousand dollars (520stf and SC1224).

Software prices were somewhat higher than those in the States but then everything costs more in France except the wine. Oddly though, with all the machines present, the absence of a large variety of software was quite obvious. Don't misunderstand, there is software available but no where near the quantities one would see in the States.

When I returned to the USA from my last deployment two years ago, I was VERY grateful for what we have in the good ole' USA!! When I return this time, I'll be adding one more item to my "grateful list" ...all the software and peripherals that are in abundance in our "land 'o' plenty".

To the folks in Sunnyvale, this sailor says: Give the USA the best part of your attention in 1989. The users in the States would love to say with heads held high.."I own an Atari ST, the finest and most versatile computer money can buy". To the Developers I beg of you please..."Remain optimistic, continue developing for the Atari ST, the ST in the USA is going to break all records!!

Editor Note:

Tom, a member of ST. J.A.U.G. of Jacksonville, should be home sometime in the first quarter of 1989...we wish him a safe voyage and a "JOB WELL DONE as far as LYBIA is concerned" >4 for NAVY... nuthin' for them!<

GEM TOS 1.4

=====

GRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT MANAGER

by R.F. Mariano

It's dated 12/05/88 and carries the following "readme" with it.

In the AUTO folder of this disk are two programs, AHDI and CAUTO. If you have an Atari hard disk, you can boot directly from this disk: AHDI will install the hard disk driver and CAUTO will launch your AUTO folder programs from drive C.

If you do not have an Atari hard disk, place whatever hard disk driver you use in the auto folder in place of AHDI (make sure it runs before CAUTO) and you should be able to boot TOS from floppy and your AUTO folder programs and accessories from your hard disk.

*** This is likely to be the final version of TOS in RAM.***

You find a simple theorem most artists follow is; "when it's done, it's done". You may say that doesn't make any sense..it does, believe me. After having used the earlier version of 1.4 for four months and then have the opportunity to use this edition, one can immediately see and feel the difference. The first noticeable change is the thinning out of more of the "helpful auto boot programs".

I had the batteries removed from the internal clock in the Mega4 I use because the clock in my hard disk appeared to be more stable. The reason I mention this is because no sooner had I installed the newer edition of TOS and attempted a bootup, it became hung up on the "clock read program" in the auto folder. Immediately, I had visions of going back to the earlier 1.4 version, but to my great surprise and utmost pleasure, the internal clock read routine in TOS 1.4 (12/5/88) is great! The clock in the Mega4 is super stable and trouble free now.

The minute this new edition booted I knew I was in for a treat, it easily compared to stepping into a sleek new sports car and expecting the greatest ride...and getting it. It boots like you are running a triple turbo driven supercar, it's up in a flash and smooth as silk. Once up and running and using it with TurboST V.1.4, the simplest description is..wow! This is nice...all the kludge programs are history, the system runs smoother and quicker and best of all...this TOS has a future.

I tried a few experiments concerning larger partitions and the ability to read them. This version shows a great deal of promise and hopefully, in the near future, a handler will be released by either.. Atari, Supra, Berkely or ICD that will do the job. Come on guys, (and gals), we need the ability to read larger and/or more partitions. The days of the "peanut whistle sized" hard drive are numbered.

Any Atari user who does not take advantage of the new TOS in ROM chips when they are made available is truly going to miss the boat. In my humble opinion, don't hesitate.. get a set or two the moment they are available.

As the great Vaudvillian once said, "you ain't seen nuttin' yet". That's the way it is shaping up at Atari. The good news coming from Sunnyvale is just what the doctor ordered. Surely, it is a sign of great things to come.....

"1989 - ATARI'S QUEST"

Hardware HardBall =====

by Richard E. Covert

This article will contrast the utility and cost of two laser printers, the Atari SLM804 and the Panasonic KX-P4450. I intend to show that while the SLM804 was a bargain when first introduced in Jan 1988 it has become overshadowed and expensive when compared to recent laser printers such as the KX-P4450.

PRICES

SLM804	KX-P4450
-----	-----
999.00 (local price of SLM804)	1499.00 (local price of KX4450)
1899.00 (monochrome Mega ST4)	1299.00 (monochrome Mega ST2)
300.00 (UltraScript)	400.00 (PostScript cartridge)
-----	-----
3198.00	3198.00

The prices cited here were the lowest prices advertised for the various systems in Phoenix AZ where I live.

HARDWARE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SLM804, KX-P4450 PRINTERS.

The Atari SLM804 is a DMA driven laser printer without an on-board processor or memory. The SLM804 prints out at 8 pages per minute. The SLM804 connects to the ST thru a high speed DMA port. The design of the DMA port controller box for the SLM804 requires that the SLM804 remain powered up when you have a hard disk drive attached to the ST's DMA port thru the SLM804's DMA controller box. The SLM804 thus MUST remain on when your other hard disk drives are on. The SLM804 has a single paper feed tray.

The KX-P4450 has an on-board processor and up to two megabytes of memory. The KX-P4450 has built in Epson and LaserJet emulators, and has builtin fonts. Additional fonts can be added via cartridges. Postscript can be added via a cartridge. The KX-P4450 has two paper feed trays. the KX-P4450 connects to the ST thru a standard Centronics parallel printer port. The KX-P4450 prints at 11 pages per minute.

USING THE SLM804 OR THE KX-P4450 IN A NON-GDOS ENVIRONMENT

The SLM804 does not include an Epson emulator and therefore will not work with programs such as CERTIFICATE MAKER or AWARD MAKER. These programs require an Epson compatible printer. The KX-P4450 includes an Epson emulator in hardware. The SLM804 requires one megabyte of system memory to format a page of graphics. This forces the user to buy a Mega ST4 if they plan to use the SLM804 with many of the newest programs. I have tried to use my SLM804 with my Mega ST2 and have found that programs such as DynaCadd simply won't print on the SLM804 due to a lack of memory. On the oother hand, the KX 4450 doesn't impose a memory penalty on the user. The KX-P4450 with it's hardware Epson and LaserJet emulator's

allow it to work with DynaCadd on a Mega ST2. The memory penalty imposed by the SLM804 means that you can't afford to give up system memory for such fine programs as NEODESK or MULTIDESK or the various desktop accessories. The KX-P4450, without a memory penalty, still allows the user to have DAs loaded in a Mega ST2.

The SLM804 does include a Diablo emulator (of sorts!!), but because of programming defects even WORD PERFECT CORP (as announced on GENie) has placed the SLM804 on its limited support printer list. The KX-P4450 with its various hardware emulators with work with WORD PERFECT and is supported by WORD PERFECT CORP. Atari promises (Real Soon Now) a new Diablo Emulator which will fix the defects in the current version. But, even after it is available, it will take time for other vendors to support the SLM804.

USING THE SLM804, KX-P4450 PRINTERS WITH GDOS

First, the SLM804 is unusable with GDOS programs without a full blown Mega ST4. This is because of the one megabyte memory penalty imposed by the SLM804's lack of on-board memory. Also, GDOS is a bit-mapped system and large font sizes require large amounts of memory. The KX-P4450 will work on a Mega ST2 and still allow you to load moderate GDOS fonts. There are various GDOS based programs which have a Laserjet printer driver available (EasyDraw is one notable example). Therefore, the KX-P4450 can be used on a Mega ST2 with few restrictions.

USING THE SLM804, KX-P4450 PRINTER WITH SPECTRE 128

Spectre 128 is a Mac SE emulator which allows the Mega ST2 to emulate a standard Macintosh SE computer. The Spectre manual specifically states that if the SLM804 is used that one megabyte of RAM must be reserved for its use. This precludes the use of the Spectre 128 on a Mega ST2/SLM804 system for all but the simplest of applications. Also, as of the date of this article David Small does not have a printer driver for the SLM804. This means that you can NOT use the SLM804 on the Spectre anyway. It has proven to be a task which Mr. Small hasn't been able to accomplish with the other continuing developments of the Spectre 128 product. Also, because of the limited market such a printer driver has in the USA, Mr. Small has not placed much emphasis on a SLM804 printer driver. Another problem with the SLM804 is that any native ST emulators are overwritten by the Spectre system software when you boot into the Mac emulation. Therefore, even the existing Diablo emulator can't be used for text printouts once you are running Spectre. This is true for any future SLM804 emulators as well.

Obviously, the KX-P4450 with its hardware emulation of both the Epson and the LaserJet printers will work with the Spectre software. In fact, there is a product called GRAPPLER LS which allows a standard Macintosh to print on a Laserjet printer. This would allow the KX-P4450 to be used even more effectively with the Spectre.

USING THE SLM804, KX-P4450 PRINTERS WITH POSTSCRIPT

Atari announced at the Fall Comdex that UltraScript (a Postscript interpreter) would be available for the SLM804. This would be a stand alone program to print PostScript files on the SLM804. As of this article, UltraScript is still not available. UltraScript's price has not been announced, but is rumored to be over \$300.00.

UltraScript would allow you to use the SLM804 in a limited fashion with Spectre. First, you have to load Spectre, run the Mac application program, save your output as a Postscript file on a Spectre formatted floppy, reboot the ST, and use Transverter to copy the PostScript file from the Spectre floppy to a standard TOS floppy, and then finally, use UltraScript to print out the file. This would have to be done each time you want to make a printout of a Mac file using the current version of Spectre 128. It may be some time before Spectre would be modified to use the UltraScript program from inside Spectre.

On the other hand the KX-P4450 has an option to add Postscript immediately. This means that you can use ANY ST or Mac program which requires a PostScript printer immediately. And you don't have to wait for a promised, but not yet delivered, UltraScript from Atari. And the difference in cost between the Postscript option for the KX-P4450, and the cost of UltraScript is minimal.

THE FUTURE OF THE SLM804

Atari Corp has promised an improved Diablo Emulator which should allow WORD PERFECT CORP to add the SLM804 to their supported printer list. Also, when Atari releases the Imagen UltraScript software many programs which can print out on a Postscript laser printer will work on the ST/SLM804 system. Calamus works fanastically with the current SLM804. If Ultrascript is ever released.

A WRAPUP

As the SLM804 is currently configured I would not recommend purchasing it unless you have an ST with four megabytes of memory. I would not purchase the SLM804 if you EVER plan to use it with the Spectre 128 Macintosh emulator. I have been ASKING Dave Small for information on when the Spectre will support the SLM804 for months. I have never gotten a satisfactory answer from GBS. Word Perfect Corp. does not support the SLM804 at the present either. As an investment, only another ST owner would be interested in buying a used SLM804. The resale price of a used SLM804 is minimal.

The KX-P4450 printer is a faster printer with more options and better emulation then the SLM804. It may cost slightly more then a SLM804, but since you can use it quite effectively on a smaller ST (as low as a 1040ST) it may actually be less expensive then the SLM804. The KX-P4450A can be used with ALL ST programs and with the Spectre 128 Mac emulator. As an investment, a used KX-P4450 could be sold to the owner of ANY other computer system. Therefore, the KX-P4450 should have a higher resale price then a SLM804.

If you feel that I have been unfair to either the SLM804 or to any of the products mentioned in this article, please feel free to send me e-mail on GENie. I can be reached as R.COVERT1 (all negative mail will be immediately directed to /dev/null :-)).

ST REPORT CONFIDENTIALâ €
=====

> Sarasota, FL ** MASTERLINK TO REVOLUTIONIZE MODEMING **

INTERSECT Software, An independant software publisher, is about to release one of the finest software packages for the telecommunications enthusiasts ever created...look for it soon...(within 90days)

> Winter Park, FL ** TURBO ST - "BETTER THAN BLITTER SPEED" **

Wayne Buckholdt, owner of SoftTrek and author of TurboST Ver 1.4 has opened a new dimension for the ST owner.."warp speed for the ST" future plans for the TurboST development include "outrageous speed for graphics display and refresh". This program works and gets along with 99% of the other programs you may use. Softrek has one of the most liberal update policies to be found in the industry, send your ORIGINAL FACTORY disk and five dollars to:

Softrek ..PO Box 5257, Winter Park, Florida, 32793.
To call Softrek.. 1-407-657-4611

> San Diego, CA ** FTL LOOKS at JAN - FEB for "CHAOS STRIKES BACK" **

Faster than Light, (FTL) has confirmed that "Chaos Strikes Back" will appear between the end of Jan and the end of Feb '89 .. partly due to a lack of packaging and an intense effort to get the 'gs' version of DM out the door.

> Sunnyvale, CA ** UPGRADE ROUTE for MEGA2 a DEADEND? **

There are some MEGA ST2's that lack the "wave soldered" holes for the extra memory. This was first noticed quite recently. It appears at first glance to be that Atari wants two different styles of motherboards in use. However, this is not an accurate evaluation, consider all the factory upgrades since 1987 to the 1040ST mother board...sounds more like a 'production cost' cutting measure to us.

> Skokie, IL ** USR WANTS \$799.00 PLUS YOUR HST to UPGRADE! **

US Robotics Corp. through it's representatives, Susan Pompa and Mike Levi, told this reporter that the upgrade route for owners of HST 9600 baud modems to V.32 is EXPENSIVE as a result of the high cost of half duplex canceling technology and Sysops would be best advised to wait. As it is expected to see the 'other' modem company make the existing gear

compatible with the "now in the field gear". HST is expected to become the Industry Standard. (time will tell)

> New York City, NY ** EUROPEAN MARKET PENETRATION APPLAUDED **

The Atari ST is a top-selling computer in West Germany, and is consistantly in the top three in England, France and the Scandanavian countries. In all of those places, the ST is viewed as a professional system; it enjoys widespread use in businesses and universities. In fact, the number of ST computers sold in West Germany (400,000+) pales the USA market significantly. Atari is now, however, making a concentrated effort at seriously penetrating the USA market.
(Radio-Electronics 2/89)

> Sunnyvale, CA **** DEVELOPER CONFERENCE CANCELLED! ****

Rumor has it that the Developer Conference of Atari Corp. has been cancelled until further notice. Further, it seems, certain folks at Atari feel they must attend a competitor's (MAC) show in the same time frame and elected to drop the Atari conference.

> Sunnyvale, CA ** ATARI PLANS TO SELL FEDERATED **

Again, rumor has it that Atari may be considering selling Federated Stores. Since it's aquisition, Federated has been a thorn in Atari's and it's dealers rumps. It's departure would be construed as a very welcome sign.

FALCON F-16!
=====

FALCON TEACHES THE ARMED FORCES!

by Richard Bennett

The latest in military technology for flight training is coming from a very unlikely source, the entertainment software industry! Sphere Inc. of Alameda Ca., points out that the game Falcon an F-16 fighter simulation for personal computers, will be the basis for a line of low cost air crew trainers for the armed forces.

Sphere has signed a seven year, exclusive contract with

Perceptronics Inc., of Woodland Hills Ca., to furnish the software for a family of F-16 training products called the ASAT (Avionics Situational Awareness Trainer) line.

Falcon, the game that is the foundation for the ASAT software, was developed by Sphere and is marketed through Sphere's Spectrum HoloByte division. Earlier this year, Falcon received three Excellence in software Awards from the Software Publisher's Association--Best Simulation, Best Technical Achievement and Best Action/Strategy. Since the game's introduction, almost a year ago, it has been on the best selling charts for IBM and MacIntosh software.

The ASAT line will be produced and marketed by Perceptronics, a pioneer and leader in low cost simulation technology. The ASAT family will include seven trainers ranging from a Basic Tabletop Trainer through an advanced Instrument and Emergency Procedures Cockpit Trainers, as well as a Cockpit Trainer with a Mini-Dome. One of ASAT trainers was first demonstrated in September at the Farnborough Air Show in England.

Each ASAT will have certain basic features, such as full color displays from an extended graphics card, a high fidelity stick and throttle, the capability for scenario review plus selectable flight and weapons parameters that may be reprogrammed by the user. Each of the trainers will be modular so that more features may be added and the modules are fully capable of networking. The ASATs will take advantage of the latest in microprocessor technology, including from one to four low cost 80386 based micro computers.

According to Sphere's CEO Gilman Louie, the current advanced technology of the flight simulations in entertainment software coupled with the complex and sophisticated combat scenarios developed by Perceptronics, is what attracted the attention of the military. He says "With their low cost we expect the military to acquire multiple trainers and to place them in strategic locations to provide readily available training to all personnel".

Sphere is a member of Robert Maxwell's multi-billion dollar Maxwell Communication group of companies. The company is known for it's personal computer simulations published under the Spectrum HoloByte trade name, some of which include; GATO, ORBITOR, PT-109, and FALCON.

Perceptronics is a publicly held company. It serves a full range of growing military needs for training, simulation and decision support, including research and development, manufacturing and field maintenance. Major Perceptronics contracts include development of network tank simulators and precision gunnery training simulators for TOW and DRAGON anti-tank missiles. Without the slightest hesitation it is safe to say that FALCON certainly DOES evolve from a fine family of blueblooded professional simulations.

Spectrum HoloByte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, California, 94501
1-415-522-3584

HELPFUL HINTS for GENie

=====

01-12-89

(C) 1987 by Atari Corporation, GENie, and the Atari Roundtables. May be reprinted only with this notice intact. The Atari Roundtables on GENie are *official* information services of Atari Corporation.

To sign up for GENie service, call (with modem) 800-638-8369. Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that). Wait for the U#= prompt. Type XJM11877,GENie and hit RETURN. The system will prompt you for your information.

By typing SET at any prompt, you can easily change/view your settings at anytime on GENie. You will arrive at a menu that will give you the following selections:

GENie SET Page 900
 Password & User Settings

1. Terminal Settings
2. Change Password
3. View/Change Handle
4. View/Change NickName

By selecting #1 (Terminal Settings) you will reach a secondary menu:

GENie SETUP Page 905
 Terminal Settings

1. GENie Setup Script
2. Terminal Settings

You can choose selection #1 which will bring you through a Setup Script that will ask you each question individually or you can choose #2 which will give you the following menu:

Terminal Settings

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Prompt Character | 63 - This sets your prompt char. to "?" |
| 2. Break Char. (0=True Break) | 3 - Break Character is set at Control-C |
| 3. Character Delete Character | 8 - Backspace setting |
| 4. Line Delete Character | 21 - Control-U will delete current line |
| 5. Terminal Type | 6 - This is the Misc. Terminal type |
| 6. Host echo ON/OFF | OFF - Keep this off for half duplex |
| 7. Page Width (# of chars) | 80 - Page Width - Number of characters |
| 8. Page Length (# of lines) | 0 - Number of lines per page length |
| 9. Save changes and return | - Saves your Changes |
| 10. Return, no save | - Exit without saving |

Selection 1 - Is your Prompt Character that GENie sends at the menus.It

can be changed by exchanging selection one with another ASCII character value you may want.

- Selection 2 - This is your BREAK Character. It is VERY important as it will allow you to break out of most Genie operations. The most common BREAK key combination is Control-C although any other combination can be used, as in CONTROL-X etc.
- Selection 3 - This is your character delete selection. You MUST set your Backspace setting to 8 No other selection will work.
- Selection 4 - This is your line delete character. It is a combination key setting, as in Control-U but may be set to another ASCII value. This will delete the entire line that you are in.
- Selection 5 - This is your terminal type setting. For the most part, you would set your setting at 6, which is miscellaneous terminal type.
- Selection 6 - This is your Host echo selection. You must have it set to OFF if you log on in half duplex. Genie works better in half duplex. Turn this selection ON if you choose to log on in full duplex.
- Selection 7 - This is your page width selection. Your selection will depend on which computer you are using. For the Atari 8 bit line your normal setting would be 40. For the Atari ST and Mega line, your setting would be 80.
- Selection 8 - This is your page length which depends on the size of your screen. Normally this would be set at 24
You can also set this selection to 0 and pause your text by using CONTROL-S and resuming text flow by typing CONTROL-Q
- Selection 9 - This selection allows you to save your changes by selecting 8 and pushing return.
- Selection 10 -This selection allows you to return without saving your changes. Just incase you have changed your mind or wanted to view what your selections are.

Selections are changed as easily as selecting the line you wish to change and replacing it with another.

By selection Option #2 on the SET page you will be able to change your password in this fashion. Please keep your password a secret and change it frequently.

CHANGE PASSWORD

Please enter your current password
?Password

Please enter your new password
It must be 8 or less characters.
?Password

Please enter your new password a
second time to be sure.

?Password

Password change is now complete.

Your new password is PASSWORD <-----THIS WILL SHOW EVEN IN FULL DUPLEX-

You can change your terminal program to FULL DUPLEX while changing your password while others are around. Your text will not show up on the screen until the last selection has been made..

Changing your handle online is as easy as selecting option #3 from the SET page. All that is needed is to type in a NEW handle or push return for the same.

VIEW/CHANGE

Handle

<----- Old Handle ----->

obsession

<----- New Handle ----->

?Music

Selection #4 from the SET page changes your nickname in the same fashion as changing and viewing your handle.

If you have any further questions on this subject within or any other, feel free to contact any one of the sysops on-line.

Command Changes on Genie

Changes have been implemented to Genie as of today. Please take a note of them.

COMMAND ON	<- will turn command mode on
COMMAND OFF	<- will turn command mode off

The ability to toggle command mode with a "C" will still be available.

?	<- will cause the full menu to be displayed without toggling in and out of command mode. With this added feature, you can quickly see a forgotten menu without getting out of command mode
---	--

For those of you that are not aware what Command mode is, try it. It allows maneuvering throughout the system without menus. And now, with the added feature of " ? " you need never leave command mode again!.

=====

The Next Generation

Intersect Software sees Atari computers as the most cost effective micros in history. Now, close to four years after the STs introduction, other computer companies still haven't caught up.

At Intersect, they are committed to the development and production of high quality software products for Atari computers. With their products clearly "A generation ahead" of the competition and having unequaled product support, continuing product improvement and reasonable pricing it is very to easy to understand why Intersect Software is rated number one by it's users and new customers.

Needles to say, Intersect Software is very excited at the prospects of the coming year and fully plans to "Blow your sox off" with new products that take full advantage of the ST and the NEW hardware products available from Atari.

The next generation for Telecommunications! All the features of Interlink..PLUS.. Multiple buffers with buffer reformat, Tabs, Word Wrap, Search - Replace. Select commonly used functions with Icons, Menu or Keystrokes. An advanced script language that helps you develop your own scripts through an easy to use interface. And, you can execute your scripts in the background.

Exit Masterlink and run other programs while an online script is executing, while a background download is running or while trying to dial that "hard to reach" number. Background scripts can even prompt you for input, if desired, while you are running that other GEM or TOS program.

Masterlink's extensive context sensitive help can be customized so that you can insert information of your own; like those neat little tricks you discover and do not want to forget.

Masterlink's built in Answer Mode gives you complete remote control. Upload or download using built in and loadable protocols. You can even execute and control TOS programs remotely, such as ARC.TTP!

All the features of Interlink plus extensive MULTI-TASKING (background transfers, background dialing and background scripts), remote TOS program execution, user friendly script generation and user customizable help. Is there really any other choice?

Masterlink will be available in the first quarter of 1989 but you can get Interlink now and be assured that the quickest way to get Masterlink is through INTERSECT's cost effective upgrade policy.

MASTERLINK - \$59.95 Color or Monochrome

INTERSECT SOFTWARE
2828 CLARK ROAD SUITE 10
SARASOTA, FLORIDA 34231

TOLL FREE

IN FLORIDA

THE SNAKE THAT POISONS EVERYBODY
=====

It topples governments, wrecks marriages, ruins careers,
busts reputations, causes heartaches, nightmares, indigestion,
spawns suspicion, generates grief, dispatches innocent people to
cry in their pillows. Even the name hisses. It's called Gossip
Office gossip - Shop gossip - Party gossip - Online gossip
It makes headlines, headaches and heartaches.
Before you repeat a story,
ask yourself:

Is it true?
Is it fair?
Is it necessary?

If not, then SHUT UP!!

--/ MegaMan /--

THIS WEEK'S QUOTABLE QUOTE
=====

"Overheard" in a Programmer's Lab..

"No system is ever completely de-bugged. Attempts to debug a system
inevitably introduce new bugs that are even harder to find".

"Besides, they are not bugs at all...THEY ARE FEATURES!"

"1989 - ATARI'S QUEST"

ST-REPORTâ ¢ Issue #70 "Your Independent News Source" January 16, 1989
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED ' ' copyright 1989

Views, Opinions and Articles Presented herein are not necessarily those of ST Reportâ ¢ or CPU Reportâ ¢. Reprint permission granted, unless noted otherwise. All reprints must include ST Report or CPU Report and the author's name. All information presented herein is believed correct, ST Report or CPU Report, it's editors and staff are not responsible for any use or misuse of information contained in this publication.
